

Leviticus 25 - Thursday, April 8th, 2010

- In Leviticus 25 the Israelites are commanded to observe a year of Jubilee in which all debts were to be forgiven the one who owed it.
- In addition to this, the ownership of any property was to be returned to its rightful Landlord. This was to take place every fiftieth year.

1 And the LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: "When you come into the land which I give you, then the land shall keep a sabbath to the LORD. 3 six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit; 4 but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard. 5 What grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine, for it is a year of rest for the land. 6 And the sabbath produce of the land shall be food for you: for you, your male and female servants, your hired man, and the stranger who dwells with you, 7 for your livestock and the beasts that are in your land -- all its produce shall be for food.

- This meant that they would have to depend on the Lord to provide enough during the six years to sustain them through the seventh.
- The agricultural benefits of giving the land a rest every seven years are recognized today by farmers as a way to be more productive.
- What they've found is that after six years vital nutrients in the soil can become depleted. Giving the soil a rest actually replenishes it.
- Israel disobeyed this command and was exiled from the land and into Babylonian captivity ultimately giving the land its Sabbath rest.

2 Chronicles 36:20-21 20 He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. 21 The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah. NIV

8 'And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years. 9 Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land. 10 And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family.

- This year of Jubilee was every fifty years, and it was to be observed as a time where they were to release all debts and all the slaves.

"The preaching of the Gospel is a proclamation of a spiritual jubilee. Jesus our great High-priest has preached deliverance to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Now, even now, each believer keeps his Jubilee. Note that the jubilee began on the evening of the Day of Atonement; our Lord's atoning work is the fountain-head of our holy joy."

Charles Spurgeon

11 That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee to you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of its own accord, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine. 12 For it is the Jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat its produce from the field.

- The year of Jubilee, as a Sabbath year, was also a time of rest. The land is given a rest, and the people were to take a Sabbatical.

13 'In this Year of Jubilee, each of you shall return to his possession.

- Not only was the year of Jubilee for releasing debts and slaves, they were also to return all property to the owner who sold it originally.
- Again, it's interesting to note that there is no record that the Israelites ever celebrated a Year of Jubilee at anytime in their history.

14 And if you sell anything to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor's hand, you shall not oppress one another. 15 According to the number of years after the Jubilee you shall buy from your neighbor, and according to the number of years of crops he shall sell to you. 16 According to the multitude of years you shall increase its price, and according to the fewer number of years you shall diminish its price; for he sells to you according to the number of the years of the crops. 17 Therefore you shall not oppress one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the LORD your God.

- This is interesting because the price of the land was predicated upon how many years remained before the Year of Jubilee.
- One commentator suggested that this is how it is for us, the closer we are to our Jubilee, the less valuable our possessions become.

18 'So you shall observe My statutes and keep My judgments, and perform them; and you will dwell in the land in safety. 19 Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill, and dwell there in safety. 20 'And if you say, "What shall we eat in the seventh year, since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce?" 21 Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years. 22 And you shall sow in the Eighth year, and eat old produce until the Ninth year; until its produce comes in, you shall eat of the old harvest.

- God is telling them that if they will observe His statutes and keep His judgments by doing them, they'll be safe and provided for.
- Even if the Sabbath year was before the Year of Jubilee leaving two years of rest, He would provide enough for three years.

Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. NIV

23 'The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me. 24 And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land.

- This was God's way of keeping the Israelites from monopolization and even exploitation by those who would seek to take advantage.

25 If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold.

- Note that a kinsman redeemer could buy the land and possessions in the event that one of their brothers had fallen on hard times.
- In other words, if they owed a debt they couldn't pay, the kinsman redeemer could redeem them by purchasing it from them.
- We studied this in Leviticus 23. It's a beautiful picture that's illustrated in the person of Boaz, and fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ.

In the case of Naomi this was Boaz; in our case it is Jesus Christ. Redemption, as described in this chapter, had to do with persons and lands; and each illustrates Christ's work on behalf of believers throughout all ages. He has redeemed our Persons. — It often happened that a Hebrew waxed poor, and was compelled to sell himself to some wealthy Gentile who sojourned in the land. He who had owned his own patrimony now wrought as a bondservant for another. But after he had sold himself he might be redeemed by his next kinsman. So we had sold ourselves for nought; we wrought the will of the flesh; we were enslaved to the fashions of the world; we obeyed the promptings of the prince of the power of the air. Alas for us! But we have been redeemed, not with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ. We have been made free by right, and have only to claim and act upon the freedom with which the risen Christ has made us free. He has redeemed our Inheritance. — What we lost in the first Adam we have more than regained in the second. For innocence, we have purity; for external fellowship with God, his indwelling; for the delights of an earthly paradise, the fullness of God's blessedness and joy. He is our nearest Kinsman. — "My brother, my sister," He says of each who will do the will of his Father. He has made Himself one with us by taking on Himself our nature, and identifying Himself with our race. We know that Jesus, our Göel and Redeemer, liveth; and that He will come to redeem us from the power of the grave, and receive us to Himself.

F.B. Meyer Devotionals on Leviticus (http://preceptaustin.org/leviticus_sermon_illustrations_2.htm)

26 Or if the man has no one to redeem it, but he himself becomes able to redeem it, 27 then let him count the years since its sale, and restore the remainder to the man to whom he sold it, that he may return to his possession. 28 But if he is not able to have it restored to himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Jubilee; and in the Jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his possession.

- This is saying that if the seller was able to buy it back when his situation improved, he certainly had the right to do that.
- Another option was for him to wait until the Year of Jubilee, at which time the land would be returned to him as the rightful owner.

29 If a man sells a house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold; within a full year he may redeem it. 30 But if it is not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house in the walled city shall belong permanently to him who bought it, throughout his generations. It shall not be released in the Jubilee. 31 However the houses of villages which have no wall around them shall be counted as the fields of the country. They may be redeemed, and they shall be released in the Jubilee.

- For some reason God only gave them a year to buy their house back if it was within the city walls. If not, it was permanently the buyers.
- The thought is that God wanted to encourage them to spread out as opposed to being too close together, which if true applies to us.
- One has suggested that Christians are like manure, if it is too close together it will stink however, if it is spread out it will fertilize.

Os Guinness in his book; "The Call" refers to this as "a religious ghetto," when he writes about an encounter he had. "I did not know it then, but the start of my search (and the genesis of this book) lay in a chance conversation in the 1960s, in the days before self-service gas stations. I had just had my car filled up with gas and enjoyed a marvelously rich conversation with the pump attendant. As I turned the key and the engine of the forty-year-old Austin Seven roared to life, a thought suddenly hit me with the force of an avalanche: This man was the first person I had spoken to in a week who was not a church member. I was in danger of being drawn into a religious ghetto."

32 Nevertheless the cities of the Levites, and the houses in the cities of their possession, the Levites may redeem at any time. 33 And if a man purchases a house from the Levites, then the house that was sold in the city of his possession shall be released in the Jubilee; for the houses in the cities of the Levites are their possession among the children of Israel. 34 But the field of the common-land of their cities may not be sold, for it is their perpetual possession.

- Here, God is addressing the Levites who had not been given any land according to Numbers 18:20, but they were given cities to live in.
- This allowed them to sell their house, but they couldn't sell any land. Simply put, God is making provision for everything and everyone.

35 If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. 36 Take no usury or interest from him; but fear your God, that your brother may live with you. 37 You shall not lend him your money for usury, nor lend him your food at a profit. 38 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.

- This dovetails off of the previous principle with the Levites and sort of takes it a step further forbidding them to charge brothers interest.

39 'And if one of your brethren who dwells by you becomes poor, and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a slave.40 As a hired servant and a sojourner he shall be with you, and shall serve you until the Year of Jubilee.41 And then he shall depart from you -- he and his children with him -- and shall return to his own family. He shall return to the possession of his fathers.42 For they are My servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves.43 You shall not rule over him with rigor, but you shall fear your God.44 And as for your male and female slaves whom you may have -- from the nations that are around you, from them you may buy male and female slaves.45 Moreover you may buy the children of the strangers who dwell among you, and their families who are with you, which they beget in your land; and they shall become your property.46 And you may take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them as a possession; they shall be your permanent slaves. But regarding your brethren, the children of Israel, you shall not rule over one another with rigor.

- We round a corner now and deal with one who had to become a slave in order to pay off his debts. He was to be treated humanely.

47'Now if a sojourner or stranger close to you becomes rich, and one of your brethren who dwells by him becomes poor, and sells himself to the stranger or sojourner close to you, or to a member of the stranger's family,48 after he is sold he may be redeemed again. one of his brothers may redeem him;49 or his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him; or anyone who is near of kin to him in his family may redeem him; or if he is able he may redeem himself.50 Thus he shall reckon with him who bought him: The price of his release shall be according to the number of years, from the year that he was sold to him until the Year of Jubilee; it shall be according to the time of a hired servant for him.51 If there are still many years remaining, according to them he shall repay the price of his redemption from the money with which he was bought.52 And if there remain but a few years until the Year of Jubilee, then he shall reckon with him, and according to his years he shall repay him the price of his redemption.53 He shall be with him as a yearly hired servant, and he shall not rule with rigor over him in your sight.54 And if he is not redeemed in these years, then he shall be released in the Year of Jubilee -- he and his children with him.55 For the children of Israel are servants to Me; they are My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

- God is now dealing with slavery, and the redemption of those who had become slaves in order to pay off their debts.

- There are a number of lessons that can be learned from this seemingly nebulous chapter, and it's for these reasons this is in our Bibles.

1. God owns everything, we own nothing. He's the owner, we are only the manager.
2. God will always provide, provided we are obedient to His Word.
3. God wants us to trust in Him, and depend to give us what we need when we need it.
4. God is building into His people a protection from greed, and it's roommate "fear."
5. God desires that we hold on loosely to the things of this world, because our Jubilee is coming.
6. God takes taking advantage of others very seriously.
7. God made us to be more productive when we rest.
8. God has given us the responsibility to help brethren who have fallen on hard times.
9. God requires that we treat everyone compassionately.